1s Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

I. GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Habitat

101 The Timbira habitat extends from 3° to 9° S. latitude and from 42° to 49° W.
131 longitude—through the northeastern part of the Central Brazilian steppe area, where that area adjoins the southeastern tip of the Amazon rain forests. The tropical forest extends back of the coastal steppe strip liable to inundation, beginning at a point on the Tocantins somewhat above the Araguaya confluence, and includes the entire Gurupy basin, the middle and lower Pindaré, the lower Grajahú, and the lower Mearim. Its domain comprises the present habitat of the following Timbira tribes: the Western Gaviões; the Krẽyé of Cajuapára; the Krẽyé and Kukóekamekra of Bacabal.*

134 But by far the greatest part of Timbira territory is covered by high steppes and
137 dry forest; tall timber occurs only in the form of *galeria* forests along the brooks
133 and rivers, also at times on the slopes of the so-called mountains (*serras*), at the foot of which these watercourses usually develop from many minor springs. These inextensive wooded tracts are of great economic significance for the steppe Indian, since they offer the only soil suitable for his primitive husbandry.

The *galeria* forest further provides not only the material for housebuilding, but also the extremely important burity palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*), the leaves of which furnish the main material for basketry while its fruits are edible and its trunks are made into logs carried in relay races. Further, there are the oleaginous babassu palm (*Orbignia speciosa*); the sororóca (*Heliconia* sp.) with its gigantic leaves, indispensable in Indian cookery; and many other useful plants.

The predominant part of the Timbira steppes consists of *campos cerrados*, that is, grass tracts with more or less dense stands of trees and bushes. Absolutely pure steppes I have seen only in the upper Pindaré country, and even these were only of minor extent. The two Timbira tribes of that region—Krĩkatí and Pụkóbye—
[101] are accordingly called by the other members of their branch Popéykateye (inhabitants of true [or beautiful], pey, steppes, põ).

The prevailing grass species is Capim agreste (*Pannascum* sp.). Noteworthy among the trees are the sucupira (*Cassiea* sp.), which symbolizes for the Timbira the power of resistance; the sambahyba (*Couratella* sp.), whose rough leaves serve to polish wood; the pau de leite (*Sapium* sp.), whose latex when mixed with powdered charcoal forms the favorite pigment; the tucum palm (*Astrocaryum* sp.), important for its fibers; the almecegueira (*Protium* sp.) with an odorous rosin much used in decorative outfits; finally, the fruit-bearing piquy (*Caryocar* sp.), bacury (*Platonia* sp.), and the mangabeira (*Hancornia* sp.).

[134] The soil is mostly sandy, more rarely clayey, and still more rarely rocky. The
133 northern Timbira country is rather flat, rising only quite imperceptibly southward.
[114] Even the most recent maps (Stieler, 1928) crowd the southern half with mountain chains—to the grave disappointment of an observer on the spot, who finds simply mesas and small plateaus with steep slopes, sporadic residual phenomena, mostly

104 * In the rendering of the aboriginal terms with which the monograph bristles it seemed best to adhere to the orthography established for The Apinayé, a slight simplification of that chosen by Nimuendajú himself. A tilde over vowels indicates nasalization; a short hook below a vowel designates it as postpalatal. The latter symbol is necessary, because it defines a phonemic difference. The following values hold for symbols requiring explanation:

ẽ = first German e in Ehe
õ = German o in ohne
ö, ü = as in German
ŋ = half vocalic ng
š = English sh
č = Spanish ch
ž = French j
x = German ch in ach
' = glottal stop

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133 in the watersheds, where a tougher stratum of rock offered more vigorous resistance to weathering. Seldom does the elevation of these *serras* exceed a hundred meters above the valley bottom, and everywhere it remains below three hundred meters above sea level. Notwithstanding their insignificance, however, these hills have played a great part in Timbira history, since their steep walls formed natural forts to which the Indians retreated on the approach of enemies.

There is no statement concerning Timbira tribes ever inhabiting the low coastal steppes of Maranhão, which are periodically exposed to inundations; but the more northerly tribes of this branch did formerly share the lake region, well stocked with fish, that extends on both sides of the lower Pindaré, Grajahú, and Mearim. However, the true home of the Timbira people lies in the arid steppe: only there—

[182] not in the primeval Amazonian forests—was it possible for the peculiar Timbira culture to evolve.

132 The climate is noticeably drier than in the adjacent Amazonian area. Unlike the territory farther east and southeast, the country does not suffer the terrors of a drought, yet there is a definite dry season from July until December. This sharp division into a rainy and a dry period affects not only economic but also social life.

Naturally on cloudless days the tropical heat from the sun is intense in the open steppe, and after noon the sand grows so hot that even Indians cannot stand on it with comfort. But after midnight the temperature often drops to such an extent that a fire is required outdoors, especially if a wind should begin to blow before sunrise.

Conquest and White Settlement

175 The Timbira country was simultaneously occupied by civilized newcomers along four distinct avenues of approach: (1) from São Luiz do Maranhão up the Mearim and Itapicurú; (2) from Pará up the Tocantins; (3) from Goyaz down the Tocantins; (4) from Bahia across the steppes to the northwest, across Piauhy.

Oddly enough, it was the last of these attempts at settlement that proved most potent and most significant for the Indians, for in the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth Bahia was a center for Portuguese colonization, while São Luiz, Pará, and Goyaz formed mere outposts.

The Portuguese probably did not come into close contact with the Timbira until after the expulsion of the French from the island of Maranhão. Then, in 1624, Bento Maciel Parente, notorious as a butcher of Indians, established a fort at the mouth of the Itapicurú, below the present town of Rosario, and afflicted the tribes of the vicinity by his slave raids.[1] Then followed Jesuit activity: in the 'sixties of the seventeenth century, the missionaries labored hard with the Guajajára, a Tupí tribe that at every opportunity fled back into the woods. They also had stations on the Itapicurú and Monim, but these failed to exert any influence on the savage Kaikaí and Uruatí suffering grievously from attacks by them. Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, indeed, until 1731, the Portuguese fought for the possession of northeastern Maranhão, between the Itapicurú and the Parnahyba. Whether the aborigines of that region included Timbira, remains unascertainable. At all events, the tenacious resistance of diverse Indian tribes rendered progress along this line relatively slow.

In the meantime the Jesuits, accompanied by military escorts, also entered the Tocantins area.[2] In 1763, a troop of Paulistas appeared, probably descending the Tocantins. They were headed by Pascoal Paes de Araujo, who enslaved the peace-

[1] Berredo, Annaes, 1:191. Saint-Adolphe, Diccionario, "Itapicurú Grande."
[2] Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 1.

It seems to be a common feature

/45 cont./

177 of all Gẽ tribes that they generally assume a bluntly negative attitude toward the civilizing efforts of the Portuguese population and, however much inclined they are to accept the amenities offered to them by the Whites with respect to material things, nevertheless in other respects they continue to live in strictly conservative fashion with the traditional tribal usages and customs.

797 In this matter even a century long catechism has not been able to change anything essential.

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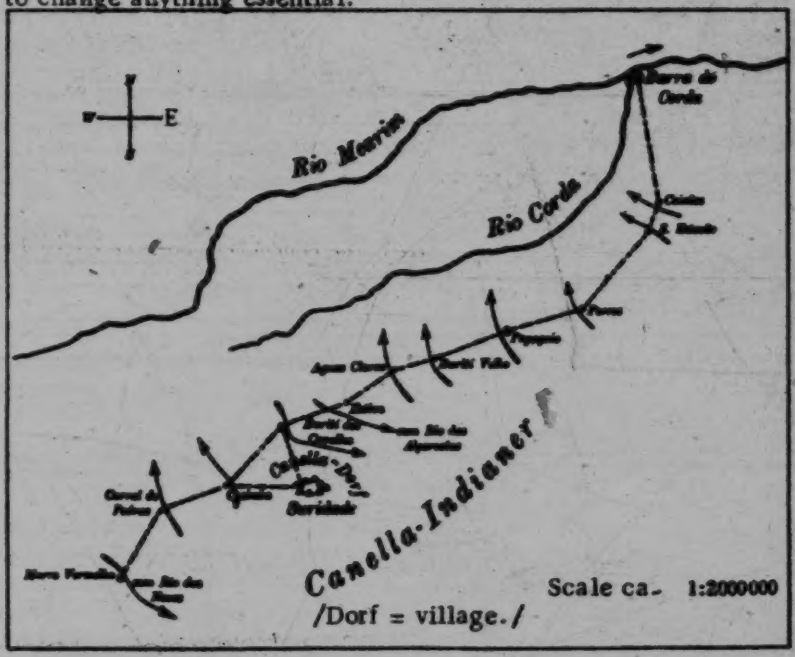

797 According to concurring mission reports, there seems to have
177 been no success at all /46/ in achieving any lasting influencing and
171 education of a Gẽ tribe in the sense of European culture.

For example, the French Dominicans on the Araguaia, according to their own statements, have been unable to exert any permanent educative influence even of only nominal value on the Kayapó /Cayapo/ during a period of almost 15 years of devoted missionary activity.